M & M Bank building restoration begun

By BARBARA WROBLESKI

The old Miners and Mechanics Bank, Main Street, will soon be getting a new look, or rather a fresh "old look" as it undergoes restoration to bring its appearance back to what it was over 60 years ago. The old bank building will be the new home of David Adams Cable Television Inc., now based in Dundaff, and its owners plan to restore the Main Street landmark and preserve its early 1900's architectural style.

The original "M & M" Bank building, purchased by Adams early this year for $15,000, was erected in 1871 on the same spot as the present structure, but bore no resemblance to it at all. According to old NEWS photos, the bank had two large front windows separated by a front door which gave the bank the appearance of an old-time grocery store.

The present building was erected in 1914, and hasn't been used as a bank since 1931. According to Dorothea Adams, her husband and other workers have made a good start in getting the old building back in shape, although there's months of work ahead of them. The scaffolding erected on the building's left side is being used by workers to clean the stone work with chemical cleaners, and to get at the metal work between and around the windows.

"The metals are being cleaned with cornstarch and lye, and the stone is being scoured with cleaning solutions. We're not sandblasting since it would ruin the stone," Mrs. Adams explained. New windows have been ordered, and will be the same size as the original ones, but will be sun-tinted.

Doing a large part of the restoration work is the Adams' son Douglas, 17, and his friend Kevin Hocker, 18, who's visiting from Englewood, Florida. Between the both of them, they've removed tons of rubbish from the building's three floors, have dug out and removed concrete floors from various rooms, and have hand-dug a pit five feet deep in the basement floor in preparation for the sinking of an elevator shaft.

"In the main lobby there will be an elevator. Drillers will be coming in to sink the shaft another 34 feet into the pit," Douglas explained. The young men created a hole in the lobby floor for the elevator cables, and also removed a drop ceiling.

They've also scraped down tons of crumbling plaster from the walls, and removed 600 lamps from the ceiling of the building immediately to the right of the bank building, purchased by Adams CATV for office and garage space. That building was previously used by the Riverdale Dress Factory and Dean F. Johnson Auto Sales.

While plaster is being removed, workers are careful to save any decorative trims so that they can be repaired and replaced, or copied where pieces are missing.

Mrs. Adams commented that the ground floor of the bank will be used for company offices while the remaining space in both buildings will be used for storage and rented offices. "If a doctor, lawyer or other professional has need for offices, we will be glad to build the offices to fit thier needs," Mrs. Adams noted.

A new roof has already been installed, and work has begun to put in a reverse cycle system which will use the same equipment for heating and cooling the structure.